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Conference Abstract

Bird Specimens Transferred from Overseas Museums to National Museums of Japan in the 1800s: The Tokyo Imperial Household Museum Collection

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Abstract

The Tokyo Imperial Household Museum inherited bird specimens that had been acquired by two national museums between 1872–1923, including specimens of foreign species, non-native to Japan (Kobayashi and Kato 2017). Today, the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology holds most of this collection (Kobayashi and Kato 2017). The collection cannot be effectively used for research, because the specimen data is unclear. My ultimate goal was to restore the collection data for the specimens. As the first step, I examined various archive records (e.g., catalogues, invoices, letters) associated with those museums involved, to clarify details of its transfer history. The collection included specimens sent in the 1800s from, among others, the United States National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution, the Australian Museum, and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (Kobayashi and Kato 2020a, Kobayashi and Kato 2020b). It also included type specimens, which are academically important. This study demonstrates that catalogues and invoices are useful to clarify the collection transfer history, which may improve the incomplete collection data.

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Keywords

Australian Museum, history of specimens, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Smithsonian Institution

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Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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